



Heritage  
Compass

# The RED Archive

## Background

The RED Archive was founded in 2019 by photographer Emma Case. It documents stories of football fan culture, specifically relating to Liverpool Football Club. The archive's growing collection is mostly digital, and includes images taken by football fans on their travels with the club; portraits of fans and their collections of memorabilia; oral history interviews and collections of programmes, badges and other material. This material is shared on social media, in special exhibitions and in workshops in care homes and other community settings. The RED Archive has also carried out contemporary collecting projects, with volunteers taking disposable film cameras to capture the events at Champions League final matches in Madrid and Paris. However, the momentum of the project had been affected by the pandemic. A crowdfunder campaign launched a week before the first lockdown, which aimed to raise enough money to transform a small touring caravan into a travelling exhibition space, had raised some of the funds but not the full amount.



The RED Archive

## What The RED Archive needed from Heritage Compass

The RED Archive was a start-up project at the time of application to the Heritage Compass programme, recently established as a CIC with a board of directors. There was clearly a high level of interest in the archive from football fans who had visited exhibitions, shared images and responded positively on social media. Varied opportunities were emerging from organisations who were keen to work with the archive, from media organisations seeking to use images to community centres wanting to host activities. However, the team lacked the necessary time to devote to the archive. There was no clear route

forward to take advantage of the emerging opportunities because of limited capacity. The board needed clarity about the preferred business model, which would come from piloting different approaches to fundraising and income generation. There is potential to generate income in a number of different ways, including merchandise sales and licensing; workshop and event fees; and fundraising for project and core costs. The challenge is deciding where to focus attention with limited capacity, and how to ensure that the archive reaches communities that could benefit the most.

Heritage Compass offered an opportunity to understand the basics about how to set up a heritage organisation from scratch, and to build skills and knowledge to help make a shift from occasional projects to regular programmes. It offered the space, through working with a mentor and critical friend, to think strategically about potential income streams and how to bring in unrestricted funding to cover the core running costs.

While completing the Heritage Compass programme, Emma was preparing to submit her first application to National Lottery Heritage Fund, for funding to complete the interior renovation of the caravan as a 'fan's bedroom' exhibition, and a community tour to venues across Liverpool. Participation in Heritage Compass would strengthen the application and demonstrate to funders that this new organisation was ready for investment.

## Delivering an Organisational Development Project

Since completing Heritage Compass training, The RED Archive has been successful in securing a £10,000 grant to complete the renovation of the caravan as a fan's bedroom exhibit, and to tour it to community venues. This is the organisation's first grant funded project. The tour focused on reaching people who have limited engagement with heritage, visiting a prison, community mental health settings, and the D/deaf community centre. Links made during the tour have resulted in an extension of the organisation's network of contacts, including with other organisations working with disadvantaged communities, and the Liverpool Football Club Foundation. Enquiries about future partnership working and about commercial use of the images in the archive are being received regularly, and the project is on the map in the city. Lots has been learned about the practicalities and costs of running activities.

## How Heritage Compass has been useful

For Emma, who was the sole founder of The RED Archive and was juggling the project with other work and family life, Heritage Compass has been 'life-changing'. The availability of mentoring and training at a time when the organisation was in a period of rapid growth was very valuable, and the critical friend and mentor were both able to respond to the RED's changing needs during the time they worked on the project. The training sessions have provided a useful framework for understanding what the organisation will need to consider as it grows. While some of the sessions seemed more relevant to the needs of more established heritage organisations, the directors can refer back to the resources and materials provided when they are needed.

## What The RED Archive needs next

The RED Archive is at an exciting time in its development, with momentum building following the NLHF funded caravan tour, and new opportunities emerging to partner with heritage and third sector organisations across the city. In order to make the most of these new opportunities, there is a need to secure core costs funding to cover staff time and the basic costs of running the organisation: insurance, storage, office space and IT needs. For the next twelve months, the focus will be on securing these core costs via grant applications and commercial activity, and on delivering the new partnership projects which have emerged as a result of the caravan tour.



The RED Archive

## Advice for other organisations

Building a small heritage organisation from scratch is a huge journey where you will wear many hats and have to spin many plates. It will feel like a big mountain to climb, and a mentor can help you to untangle the many tasks and remind you to celebrate the wins.

Speaking to other organisations in breakouts was always fruitful, reflective and encouraging. As a relatively new organisation, it felt difficult to be in the sessions with organisations with staff teams, venues and marketing departments, but the cohort reminded me that what we have in terms of audience, support and loyalty and ability to react quickly is very valuable.

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# Update

January 2024

At the end of The RED Archive's involvement in the Heritage Compass programme, the organisation had recently completed its first project funded by NLHF, touring an exhibition in a caravan to community venues including mental health settings and HMP Liverpool. This pilot project demonstrated the significant potential of the archive to reach people who do not engage with heritage and the benefits of RED's activities for people with mental health challenges.

At the end of the year the need for core costs funding had been identified as a priority. It had become clear that in order to professionalise, the organisation would need to cover the basic costs of managing an archive such as appropriate storage space, insurance and web hosting. There was also a limit to the amount of unpaid time the directors were able to commit to partnership development, scheduling, and fundraising, as well as documenting and growing the archive itself.

As a result of the success of the 2022 community tour, many opportunities emerged in 2023. The RED Archive worked on new projects with the LFC Foundation, delivering further caravan events and a special community engagement project themed around the relationship between Liverpool FC and Celtic FC, to coincide with a charity fundraising match. Opportunities to exploit the archive commercially emerged and photographs were licensed for use in advertising. The archive also contributed content to National Museums Liverpool's House of Memories app, which provides images to support reminiscence activity for people living with dementia. Another key activity built on a contemporary collecting project started in 2022, which sent fans to the Champions League final in Paris with disposable cameras. There was a need to develop a carefully considered response as the event was poorly managed, leaving fans in distress. The photographs were exhibited alongside a panel event with representatives from supporters' groups curated by the RED Archive.

The focus on delivery of these projects in 2023 has not allowed the time needed to focus on strategy and fundraising and more work needs to be done to secure the long term stability of the archive. Approaches to potential funding partners are currently in development. Alongside this, Emma is continuing to develop creative ways to use the archive for the benefit of the local community.